

## Budget

For the first time in ten years, the Connecticut state budget became law without my support. While the adjusted state budget contains some positive features it turns a small but hard earned surplus into a whopping projected deficit in the space of one fiscal year. The current budget, which I supported last year, created a modest surplus of approximately \$230 million. Instead of putting the surplus into the "Rainy Day" fund as required by the state Constitution, the entire surplus was used for new and unsustainable spending this year. The revenue and spending system that was put in place under the new adjusted budget includes the use of several gimmicks. According to the nonpartisan Office of Fiscal Analysis this adjusted budget, when combined with the normal growth in expenditures, creates a projected budget deficit between \$680-\$780 million as we head into next year's budget cycle.

No budget is perfect. As Ranking Member of the Appropriations Committee I realize how difficult it is

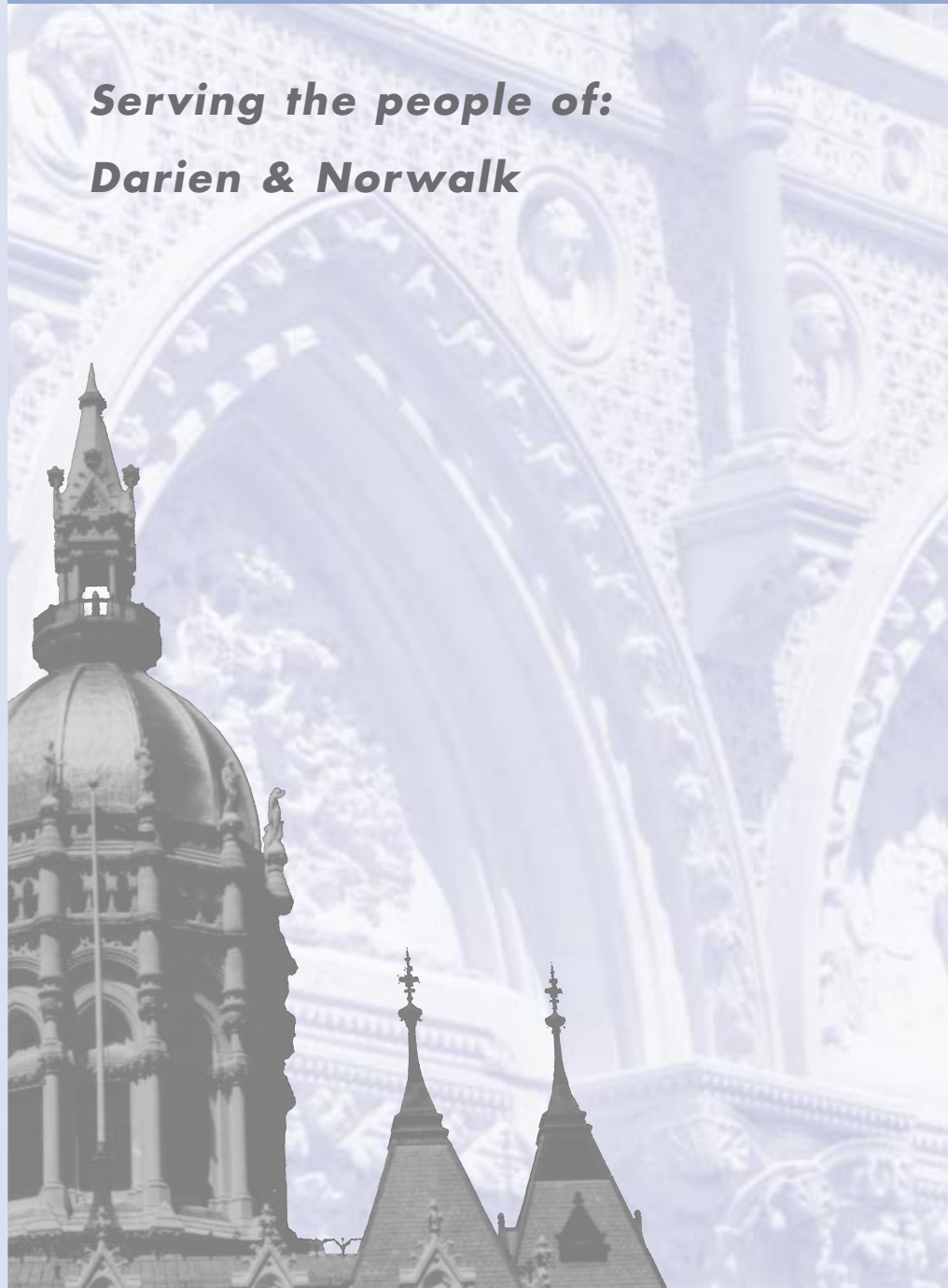


to put a budget together and reach a consensus. However, I don't believe that taking a modest surplus and cavalierly turning it into a significant deficit was the best we could do.

State Senator

# Robert L. Genuario

Serving the people of:  
Darien & Norwalk



State Senator

## Robert L. Genuario

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State Senator

# Robert L. Genuario

## —Thank You—

Dear Neighbor,

For the last 14 years, I have had the honor and privilege to serve the residents of Norwalk and Darien in the Connecticut State Senate. As many of you already know, 2004 will be my last year serving in the General Assembly. I want to take this opportunity to thank you, the residents of the 25th District, for putting your trust in me. The wonderful people I have met in our towns over the years have truly made this experience something I will cherish. From the bottom of my heart, thank you!

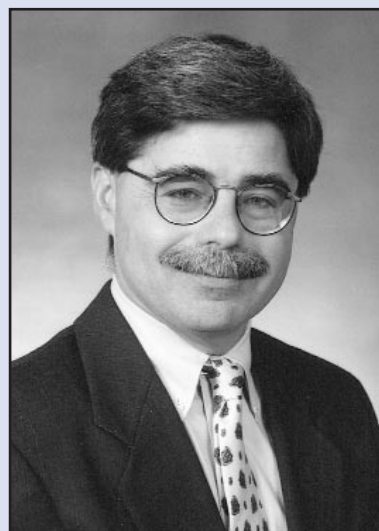
The business of the legislature, however, still goes on and this report is dedicated to informing you about some of the important issues that were acted upon this year. From clean cars to our community colleges, the General Assembly worked in a bipartisan manner to make sure that the matters surrounding Governor Rowland did not affect our ability to legislate.

Please take a few moments to read through this report which details some of the important issues that were addressed this year. You can also visit my state senate website at [www.senatoreps.state.ct.us](http://www.senatoreps.state.ct.us) for updates on events taking place at the State Capitol.

For specific questions regarding these issues or any issue concerning state government, please feel free to contact my office at 1-800-842-1421, email me at [Robert.Genuario@po.state.ct.us](mailto:Robert.Genuario@po.state.ct.us) or write to me at: Senator Robert Genuario, Legislative Office Building, Room 3400, Hartford, CT 06106.

Thank you for taking the time to read my 2004 legislative report.

Sincerely,



### Norwalk Community College

This year the legislature authorized \$196 million for capital improvements for higher education facilities throughout the state. Included in that funding is over \$7 million for Norwalk Community College. The funding clears the way for a new 35,000 square foot addition to the West Campus that will include new classrooms, seminar rooms and faculty offices. In addition, major upgrades will be made to the existing buildings that will improve classroom and laboratory size and provide new equipment. Alterations to the library and cafeteria as well as exterior improvements such as roof replacements and parking will also be made through this project.

### Clean Cars

Connecticut is now in line with New York and Massachusetts in the effort to reduce air pollution after the legislature overwhelmingly passed a measure I co-sponsored that requires Connecticut to implement California's Low Emission Vehicle program. Beginning with the 2008 model year, all new cars and light trucks sold in Connecticut must meet new low emission standards. This program sets emission standards that go beyond the current minimum federal standard. The legislation also requires that up to 10% of cars sold in Connecticut must be Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV). These new standards will help improve the public health and quality of life for the residents of Connecticut and the entire region. Fairfield County in particular suffers from significant air pollution in large part due to automobile emissions and this legislation, which is equivalent to removing over 192,000 cars from the roads, should have a positive impact on Fairfield County's air quality.

### Transportation

Transportation continues to be one of the most important issues facing the residents of Fairfield County. If the winter months proved anything, it's that improvements to commuter rail service can no longer be ignored. Aging cars that could not withstand cold weather were put out of service, which created increased delays and headaches for commuters. That is why I was pleased to support the \$60 million that has been authorized for the purchase of new rail cars. Our roads continue to be crowded, thus we need to make Metro-North more attractive for commuters. The only way this can be done is with better equipment and better service at an affordable price. The purchase of new rail cars is a first step, but only a first step, in the right direction.



Senator Genuario talking with area doctors on Doctor's Day at the State Capitol

### ConnPACE

No senior citizen should ever have to worry about losing their estate just because they are receiving a drug benefit. This session the legislature was successful in repealing the controversial "reach back" provision that would have allowed the state to make claims on the estates of certain deceased ConnPACE participants. I worked to undo this provision because I do not believe the state should be in the business of trying to recoup program expenses through the probate courts, and I do not think seniors in Connecticut should worry about losing their estates in order to receive a prescription drug benefit.

### Teachers' Retirement Fund

The state Senate unanimously passed a resolution, which I cosponsored, calling for a Constitutional amendment that would require the legislature to fund the Teachers' Retirement Fund (TRF) at 100% every year. Currently, we have a \$3 billion unfunded liability in the TRF from years of under funding. If we do not begin to properly fund the state's portion of the TRF, the state will be faced with having to make severe reductions to teacher benefits as well as across-the-board increases to our state's tax structure. That is because every dollar that is taken out of the fund now will accrue tenfold over time. There are those who say we cannot afford to fund the TRF fully because it would require the state to make substantially greater payments to the fund each year. As one of the most vocal advocates of full funding in the General Assembly, I say we cannot afford NOT to do this.

Unfortunately, the measure was never taken up in the House of Representatives for a vote, thus we are left yet again this year with a system that depends solely on the discretion of the legislature as to whether or not we meet our fiscal obligations or pass them on to future generations.

### Electric Power Lines

The legislature also passed major legislation this year in response to the proposed Norwalk to Middletown power line project. The new law sends a clear message to utility companies and the Siting Council that high voltage power lines must be buried wherever possible. The act establishes a presumption that high voltage power lines located near residential areas, schools and certain land areas be placed underground. The long-term health effects of electromagnetic fields are not clear, so if for some reason the utility companies cannot bury the line in a particular location then it is up to the utility company to prove that potential health problems do not exist.